

Butcher Knife Used in Station Robbery

Torrance Press-Herald

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FOR A FIRE HORSE . . . Retiring Fire Chief J. J. Benner (left) receives a model aerial ladder truck from Mayor Albert Isen during a retirement banquet here this week. Chief Benner is winding up 30 years of city service which started when he took a temporary job as Torrance's only paid fireman. (Press-Herald Photo)

Fire Chief Honored On His Retirement

Tributes from his many Torrance friends and associates, and from Southland fire officials poured in on retiring Chief J. J. Benner Wednesday night as he was toasted at the end of a 39-year career with the city.

He was praised by Mayor Albert Isen for providing the leadership in building the Torrance Fire Department, and the "devotion, brilliance, effort, and spirit," he had shown and passed on to his associates.

County Fire Chief Keith E. Klinger, III with the flu, sent his thanks to Benner in a letter which said the South-

land was losing one of its best chiefs.

THE FAREWELL salute was held at the Los Verdes Country Club and drew a capacity crowd of well wishers.

In addition to the words of thanks from City Manager Edward J. Ferraro and others, Benner received scrolls, plaques, a retirement badge, and a model ladder truck with the TFD insignia on it. He also received mementos of his days in the fire service, and his associates in the Torrance Fire Department gave him a lathe and tools for his home workshop.

Benner began his fire career in 1927 when as the city's only paid fireman,

boasted one old engine which needed frequent overhaul and the firemen knew something was brewing when "Jake" Benner picked up his sledge hammer and banged away at the old steel railroad wheel hanging by the station. The wheel now is embedded at the entry to the central fire station, Carson Street and Crenshaw.

The fire department now has a complement of 133 men and four modern stations and equipment. A fifth station is to be constructed soon near Hawthorne Boulevard and Del Amo.

What's he going to do now? He and Mrs. Benner plan to travel around the United States, he told his well-wishers Wednesday night.

THE VOLUNTEER service

34,000 Enrolled In School Here

Predictions by Torrance school officials last summer that enrollment in the city's schools would top the 34,000 mark by Oct. 1 have come true—ahead of schedule, according to Dr. Louis Kaplan, assistant superintendent of schools.

Schools opened here Wednesday, Sept. 14, with a total enrollment of 33,090, Dr. Kaplan said. Within 10 days, enrollment had reached 34,033 and is still increasing, he said.

Elementary enrollment now stands at 24,429 and high school enrollment has reached 9,604, Dr. Kaplan explained. This represents a gain of 636 elementary students and 307 high school students during the first two weeks of classes.

Torrance High School recorded the biggest increase, with nearly 300 students enrolling after the first day of classes. Total enrollment at Torrance High is now 2,227.

Victory Elementary School, the district's largest elementary school, became the sixth school to begin double sessions here this fall when enrollment reached 1,423 students.

Court Denies Hearing For Senate Candidate

Bandit Strikes For \$80

A knife-wielding bandit escaped with about \$80 from a North Torrance service station early Friday morning after he returned to the station office for a second time.

Louis K. Tidwell, 23, attendant at the station at 18200 Hawthorne Blvd., told police the bandit first approached him carrying a can and asked for gasoline. When Tidwell turned his back on the man, the bandit pulled a butcher knife and told Tidwell, "Let's go inside."

Once in the station office, the man told Tidwell to "open the box and give me the money." He then instructed Tidwell to lay down on the office floor.

The bandit, described as a 22- or 23-year-old Negro, left the station office, but returned and told Tidwell, "That's not enough. Give me all you got in your pockets." The man then left a second time, warning Tidwell, "If you come outside, I will kill you."

The bandit fled on foot with \$74 from the station cash box and \$6 taken from Tidwell.

Traffic Accidents Decrease

The traffic safety trend in Los Angeles County is encouraging, despite increases in population and motor vehicle registrations, according to Supervisor Burton W. Chace.

A report compiled by the County Road Department, which analyzes 1965 traffic accidents, showed a one per cent reduction in accidents for the year.

Cited as a factor in improving traffic safety was the road department's year-round program of searching out, by computerized methods, locations with a high accident rate and applying necessary methods of control.

"During 1964 and 1965, the county installed left turn pockets, left turn phasing, signals and other improvements at 34 intersections in an attempt to cut down on intersection crashes," Chace said.

These improvements resulted in a reduction of 171 accidents below the 1964 total and 117 fewer injuries. An additional 81 intersections were improved during 1965 or are budgeted for 1966-67.

Other anticipated safety programs included installation of medians along major highways and an analysis and recommendations to reduce the number of mid-block accidents.

"We are working daily to make our streets and highways safer," Chace concluded. "If we can encourage drivers to exercise more caution, we will cut down the accident and death rate even more."



PIONEER HONORED . . . A plaque honoring the late Sam Levy to be displayed in the city park at Carson Street and Plaza Del Amo is presented to Mrs. Levy by City Councilman George Vico (left) and Mayor Albert Isen. The park, site of the YWCA and the Boy Scout Center, will be known as Sam Levy park in honor of the late Torrance merchant and business leader who spent many of his recent years spearheading development of the YWCA, Scout Center, and other civic projects. (Press-Herald Photo)

Nab AWOL Marine For 30-Cent Theft

Theft of 30 cents from a 15-year-old North High student Wednesday has resulted in the arrest of an 18-year-old steelworker who apparently is AWOL from the Marines.

Torrance police arrested Daniel J. Updegraff, 18030 Van Ness Ave., Friday morning after officers stopped the car which he was driving because it fit the description of a car used in the Wednesday morning robbery.

Work Set On Carson Area Road

A highway project for the improvement of Wilmington Avenue between 223rd Street and Sepulveda Boulevard has been approved by County Supervisors, Board Chairman Burton W. Chace said today.

Contract bids for the project will be opened by the board Oct. 25. The project plans and specifications were prepared by the County Road Department, and construction is scheduled for completion in May, 1967.

Included in the project will be the construction of curb, gutter, pavement and roadway drainage structures. In addition, the traffic signals at Wilmington Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard will be improved.

Police said Updegraff is wanted by the Armed Forces for being absent without leave from Camp Pendleton, near San Diego. Updegraff apparently has been AWOL since Nov. 22, 1965.

Officers said they stopped the car Friday because it fit the description of a car used Wednesday after the North High student was roughed up and robbed while on his way to school. The youth told police a man approached him Wednesday morning and asked if he had any money. Then chased him into a field near 182nd Street and Crenshaw Boulevard, hit him, and then took 30 cents from him.

Updegraff was arrested shortly before 10 a.m. Friday and booked at the Torrance City Jail on suspicion of robbery. Police discovered the

Voters' League To Air Ballot At Area Church

Issues of the November ballot will be disclosed at the Walteria Community Methodist Church by the Torrance League of Women Voters Wednesday, at 7:30 p.m.

League speakers will present the pros and cons of the 17 state propositions as well as some local and county measures. A question and answer period will be included and current literature will be available.

Dills to Stay on Ballot

A Long Beach Superior Court Judge Friday refused to order Judge Ralph C. Dills' name removed from the Nov. 8 ballot as a Democratic nominee for the State Senate in the 32nd District.

Judge Joe Rayercraft refused to assume jurisdiction in the suit, which was brought by V. Lane Knight and Joe Bruno. The suit alleges Dills is not eligible to stand for election for the State Senate in the 32nd District because he did not meet the residency requirements prescribed by the State Constitution.

Knight is the Republican nominee in the 32nd Senate District. Bruno is one of nine unsuccessful candidates in last June's Democratic primary election.

NAMED IN the suit were Benjamin S. Hite, Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters, and Frank M. Jordan, Secretary of State. Judge Dills was named as the "real party of interest" in the suit, which asked that his name be removed from the ballot.

Attorneys for Hite and Judge Dills contended the court did not have jurisdiction in the matter, citing provisions in the State Constitution which make the Legislature the judge of qualifications of its own members.

A California Supreme Court ruling affirming the Legislature's right to judge the qualifications of its members—and prohibiting the courts from doing so—also was cited by attorneys for Dills and Hite.

ATTORNEY James J. Oppen (Continued on Page A-2)

Woman Hurt in Collision

An elderly Torrance woman suffered minor injuries Friday afternoon when the car in which she was riding was involved in a collision at Torrance Boulevard and Maple Avenue.

Mrs. Jessie McGowan, 70, of 820 Cerise Ave., was treated at Little Company of Mary Hospital and released following the crash, which occurred about 5 p.m.

Mrs. McGowan was a passenger in a car being driven by her husband, John McGowan, also 70.

Police identified the driver of the second car as Alfred Jenkins, 27, of Los Angeles. Jenkins sustained minor injuries, but refused medical aid.

Officers reported the crash occurred when McGowan, driving west on Torrance Boulevard, attempted to turn left onto Maple Avenue. Officers said McGowan failed to yield the right-of-way to the Jenkins vehicle.

Mayor, Councilman in Debate ---

Mayor Albert Isen and Councilman David K. Lyman have agreed to appear before members of the Riviera Homeowners at their regular meeting in Parkway Elementary School Monday evening at 8. Topic of the discussion will be the council-sponsored charter amendment proposal on the November ballot to strip Torrance voters of the right to elect the mayor at large and return the selection to a City Council majority. Lyman introduced the plan for the ballot and is one of four councilmen backing the proposal. Isen is opposed. President Stanley Dunn said James Finlay, vice president of the homeowners, would moderate the discussion.

Board to Meet at South ---

Members of the Torrance Board of Education will meet at South High School tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. The meeting, to be held in the school cafeteria, is the first of four meetings planned within the next three months at the city's high schools. During tomorrow's session, trustees will consider an agreement which will provide for the establishment of a regional Occupational Skills Center here. The agreement, if approved, will call for the center to be built and operated by seven area school districts ranging from Culver City to the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

Employees Seek Benefits ---

Torrance city employees will seek increased fringe benefits Tuesday when the City Council convenes at 5:30 p. m. for its regular meeting. Chief items being sought by the Torrance City Employees Association include increased holiday pay, a longevity plan, increased insurance contributions by the city, and liberalization of the city's current sick leave policy. City Manager Edward J. Ferraro will recommend that the employee requests be turned over to his office for study and a report to the council.